

The Great SIN of  
**FORMALITY**

IN  
GOD'S WORSHIP;  
OR,

The Formal Worshipper proved a  
**LYAR** and **DECEIVER**;

Being the Subject of a

**SERMON**

Preacht on the Weekly LECTURE  
in BOSTON.

By Joshua Moody, Minister of the Gospel.

Mat. 15. 8. This People draweth nigh unto  
me with their Mouth, and honoureth me  
with their Lips, but their Heart is far from  
me.

Jer. 2. 8. Behold you trust in lying words that  
cannot profit.

Mal. 1. 14. Cursed be the Deceiver which  
hath in his Flock a Male, and offereth unto  
the Lord a corrupt thing.

Boston, Printed by Benjamin Harris, and  
John Allen, at the London-Coffee-House:  
And are to be Sold by Richard Wilkins.

1691.

Mrs John A. Lewis

April 12, 1898



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The great Sin of FORMALITY

IN GODS

WORSHIP

Hof. 11. 12.

*Ephraim compasseth me about with Lies, and the House of Israel with Deceit.*

**T**He Subject which I am at present to handle is the sin of Formality in Gods Worship, which is the sin condemned in the Text, as none of the least of those many and very great controversies, that the Lord hath had all along with his professing people, and at this day has particularly with our selves.

Take a brief explication of the Terms.

*Ephraim* was the Second Son of *Joseph* born in *Egypt*, and that name given him in Remembrance of Gods making him fruitful in the land of his affliction, *Gen* 41. 52. unto him *Jacob*, in his Blessing, gave the Preference to his Elder Brother, *Gen*. 48. 20. The name is sometimes used for the whole

Tribe that lineally descended from him, and here for the Ten Tribes, of whom he was the Head or Chief, and is the same with

[*The House of Israel.*] *Israel* signifies a pre-vaileth with God, and was the new Name which God gave to Jacob in memory of his Victorious combat at *Peniel*, Gen. 32. 28. And all his posterity, the whole visible Church, bare that Name of *Israel*, until after the separation of the Ten Tribes from the two, when the Name of *Israel* was frequently given to the Ten, and the Name of *Juda* unto the two, so that *Ephraim* and *Israel* in the Text are homonymous Terms, or intend the same people.

[*Compasseth. we.*] *Compassing* is sometimes used for Worship, and in that sense it is to be taken here. Thus *Psal.* 26. 6. *Compassing Gods Altar*, intends Worshipping of God, offering up Sacrifice on his Altar, which was one principal part of Worship. In the same sense is the phrase used *Psal.* 7. 7.

Christ hath promised that where his people meet together in his Name, (as all that are regularly Assembled for any part of Instituted Worship do) he will be in the midst of them, *Mat.* 18. 20. and if he be in the midst of us, we are then compassing him about.

The Hebrew word in the Text is also sometimes used for Beleaguering or Besieging

ing a Town or City in an hostile way, and truly God accounts such hypocritical worship little better than waging War against himself, & such *Compassers* he looks at as his Besiegers, and they will sooner or later be dealt with as such.

Some Expositors attribute it to the Prophet, as if he were beset with their Lies and scandalous Reports, to the prejudice of his Ministry, which is one of Satans stratagems to prevent the Success of the Gospel, by reproaching them that dispense it: Thus they served *Jeremiah*, chap. 20. 10. & 18. 18. and thus they lay snares for him that reproves in the Gate, *Isa.* 29. 21. When Gods Messengers are reprovng sin, they may look for such Treas, (though I would beg of this Auditory, that they would be more kind to us, and to themselves too, while we are according to our Commission, *Isa.* 58. 1. shewing Gods People their sin) It's a good note of one upon the place: *A Faithful Minister is the Center in which all the Lives of Lies and Standards meet.* An ill case, if they be silent God is displeased, if they speak men are angry.

But I rather take it in the fore-going sense, as referring to God in his Worship.

[ *With Lies and Deceit.* ] These Terms also mean the same thing, unless you will say the latter is Exegetical, and shews what was their aim and design in lying, viz. to deceive.



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God, they pretended to great devotion in keeping up the external form of Worship, without being sincere and real therein, and that was their lying, whereby they thought ( tho' it was wretched Atheism so to think ) to put God off, to deceive and put a cheat upon him, as if the Omniscient God could be imposed upon.

But this will be more fully opened in Explaining the Doctrine.

## D O C T R I N E.

*Formality in God's Worship is accounted by him as Lying and Deceiving, and so is a very provoking sin. Formal Worshippers are looked at by God as liars and deceivers, and thereby exposed to his sorest anger.*

There are three sorts of False and Deceitful Worship, which God is Displeased with.

1. When men Worship any other Person or thing than the one onely, living and true God, when they have and serve any other God before or besides the True God; and this is gross Idolatry and a breach of the first Commandment.

2. When they Worship the true God but with False Worship, such as never came into his mind, but is the meer product of their own Invention, which yet they observe

serve in stead of, or mix or joyn with his Institutions. This is a Breach of the Second Commandment, and very offensive to a Jealous God.

3. When the object of the Worship is right, and the Worship it self is for the matter, or as to the externals thereof true, but the miscarriage of it lies in the manner of doing it, in that it is done with a Dissembling Heart, or in a cold formal manner. And this sin is forbidden in the third Commandment, which directs about the right manner of performing true Worship (both natural and Instituted) to the true God.

The two latter may be intended here, and chiefly the third, or a mixture of them both ( for the Heart cannot be right where the Worship is wrong ) yea in a sense all three of them; For they had the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, at best a false Medium, nor could they any more excuse themselves from the missing it in the object of worship too, than their Fathers, who tho' they proclaimed a Feast to *Jehovah* before the Golden Calf, yet might be said to have chosen new Gods (as *Judg.* 5. 8. ) and to Sacrifice to Devils and not to God, *Deut.* 32. 17 And be sure all this while their Heart was not right with God.

But I shall confine my Discourse unto such as are Professors of the true God,



who have also the right-way of Instituted Worship, but through the falseness of their hearts do but lye to him in all they perform ; a sin commonly practised in our Days by Professors of Religion.

*Q. What is this Formal Worship, which is called Lying and Deceit?*

*A.* It's worth our inquiring into, because called by very hard names, very much complained of in Scripture, and there is abundance of it among Gods visible people, yea too much among those that may have the Root of the matter in them, and also because it's very provoking to God, and mischievous to them that use it.

Now I call that Formal Worship, which is opposed to that which is in reality. Paul opposes a *Form of Godliness* to the power of it, *2 Tim. 3. 5.* Such Pretenders make Perilous Times. He intends such Persons as use an appearance without any reality, a shew without any substance. They made a profession of Godliness, and used much Pretensive Devotion in Worship, but there was nothing in it, save an appearance and shadow only, *Vox preterea nihil*, an empty Form, no powerful sincerity in their heart, nor good fruit in their life. And this Vizard men put on to deceive, that they may walk *incognito* in the World.

Formal Wership is Hypocritical Worship, like a painted Tomb without, but  
Corrupti-



Corruption & Rottemness within, Fire without and Frost within, A flame in the mouth but Ice in the Heart: A perfect piece of Pageantry, a Play, where he that is in shew a King, is in Reallity a Beggar.

Such *lying* Worship is thus Described by Christ Mat. 15 : 8, 9. *Drawing near to God with the Lip*, when the Heart is far from him, near in look and gestures, but far in heart and spirit, this is the spirit of an Hypocrite. When out of any low, base, inferiour end, men are drawn or driven to those duties which indeed they have no Heart to, this the Lord accounts *lying* in his Worship. And the more external Preparations, the more Cost and Grandeur there is in it, the bigger the *lye*.

Christ reduceth all our Obedience, whether in point of Worship or otherwise, unto that one word *Love*, now if not *loving* Worship, its *lying* Worship; there is an Idol in the Heart, which has their Love, while God has their Lips only, they pretend Devotion to God, but the Idol in the Heart has the Heart all the while.

When the Heart and Body do not go together in the Service of God, the Body shews much love, but the Heart is otherwise employed. Ezek. 33 : 31.

This lying worship is opposed to wor-

Shipping God in Spirit and Truth, John 4. 24. Paul served God with his spirit, Rom. 1. 9. But their Spirits, Soul and Hearts are not concerned or engaged, and so there is no Truth in their services, because no Spirit in them, they are not spiritual and so cannot be true, for it is Truth in the inward parts that God requires, Psal 51, 6. Ephraim was called a silly Dove without an Heart. Hos. 7, 11. And that is a silly, sorry Sacrifice that has no heart in it, nor can it be acceptable to God, Who chiefly minds the Heart, Jer. 30. 21. 22.

And as the heart is to go with it, so the Conversation is to be consonant thereto. Want of either makes the worship a lye. As a man thinks in his heart so is he, Prov. 23. 7. But that is known to God only and himself. But when the Conversation contradicts the Devotion his deceitfulness is Obvious to men also Tit. 1. 16. and here Christ gives this Direction for the knowing of men by their fruits, Mat. 7. 16. And if the Heart be false the Conversation will not be right, for the Heart governs the Conversation. If the Heart go not with the tongue, the Walk will to the Prudent observer (at least often) give the Tongue the lye, but if heart and tongue joyn, the Conversation among men will evidence (evidently) the sincerity toward God.



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Now such Worship is called } Lying  
} deceiving

1. Lying, which is either } Verbal or  
} Practical.

Verbal lying when he speaks not the Truth in his Heart, *Psal.* 15, 2. Affirming that to be Truth which he knows to be untruth, or doth not know to be Truth, or denying that to be Truth, which he knows, at least thinks to be Truth, or knows not but that it may be Truth.

Practical Lying is when a man pretends and professes what he neither intends nor performs, when his works deny what his words Profess, this is practical lying, he *lies* in his way, though he speaks right in his words, *1st.* 1. 6. He assumes the Name of Religion, but he practically denies the thing, which consists not in words, but in Power, in Love, in Righteousness, Holiness, self-denial, Mortification, &c. to which he is a stranger. And this is the Lying which the Lord blames them for here, and threatens else where, *Isa.* 1. 10. 16, *Isa.* 58. 1-7. with *Psal.* 50. 7. 22.

2. It's called Deceit also, They compass me with Deceit: Thus *Mal.* 1. 14. He that has a Male in his Flock, and offers a corrupt thing to the Lord, is called a Deceiver, and such an oblation is a piece of meer deceit.

A Deceiver is a sly, subtil, under hand Dealer



**Dealer**, one that plays *Leger-de-main*, that cogs and cheats, and designs to put a *sham* upon another, and this is the aim and spirit of a *Formalist* in Gods Worship; he contrives to put a cheat upon God, indeed to mock him, Gal: 6. 7. And such a Worshipper is called a Deceiver.

1. Because he defrauds the glorious God of his just due, and of the true Homage and Service which belongs to him from his Creatures. It's true, God cannot properly be deceived, but he offers at it, does what he may towards it, and like a foolish, ignorant Atheist, imagines he may do it; thinks God will not see when he turns him off with a bad Sacrifice for a good one, a corrupt and lame one for a sound one, Job 22. 12, 14. Thus he robs God of his Right, sends away the Heart about other business, and complements God with a little Bodily Exercise, or Tongue-Devotion. The worm of his Lust doth eat the Kernel, and then with some seeming solemnity he makes the Heart-searching and Heart-demanding God a Present of the empty shell. A very shameful and affronting Cheat.

2. It may be called a piece of Deceit, because it does really deceive others: men that can only judge by the outward appearance, are utterly deceived by him. *Samuel* was deceived by *Elisha's* look, and *Philip*

*Lip by Simon Magus's Profession. Come for my zeal for the Lord was enough to have Blinded a Jonadab, save that the loud Trumpeting his own commendation was too much like an Hypocrite. Oh, thinks a good and charitable Christian, this is certainly an Excellent Man; see his Parts, Zeal, Affection, &c. and his aim being to seem Religious before men, he puts himself in his finest dress when he appears upon the Stage in open view, turns the best side outward when he has a great many Spectators; while a sincere Soul whose business is to approve himself to God, is most engaged and enlarged in his Closet, where none but he that sees in Secret can observe him.*

3. But finally he is called a Deceiver, because he doth most miserably and fatally deceive himself, Jam. 1. 22, 26. He puts a Paralogism or Falley upon himself, argues falsely, and concludes fallaciously concerning himself. And it's a proper punishment for him that thinks to deceive in his performance, to find himself deceived in his expected acceptance. As Jacob feared lest his Father might, this Deceiver shall find that the All-seeing God most certainly will find out the Deceit, and reward him with a Curse instead of a Blessing, Gen. 27. 12. Such persons may sport themselves with their own Deceivings for a time, 2. Pet. 2.



3. 1 But the Deceiver shall be deceived at  
 aft. And he is the worst Deceiver that  
 deceives himself.  
 For a further discovery of this sin of  
 Lying and Deceit in Gods Worship, let us  
 take notice of some of the Deceits used in  
 Prayer, Hearing, Receiving the Sacrament,  
 Sanctifying the Sabbath; and our par-  
 ticularizing here, will offer much matter of  
 conviction as we go along.

1. Of Compassing God about with Lies  
 and Deceit in Prayer.

Prayer is no small part of Instituted  
 Worship, and to be made use of with every  
 part of Worship. And doubtless Gods  
 own Children have need to pray with Da-  
 vid, That God would remove from them the  
 way of Lying even when they are Praying,  
*Psal. 119. 29.*

In solitary prayer when they enter into  
 their Closets and shut their doors, they  
 are more happy than the most and best of  
 Christians always are if they can shut out  
 all vain and impertinent thoughts from  
 coming in. All such (and much more  
 wicked, blasphemous and unbelieving)  
 thoughts are faults, and if allowed are  
 though they are not wickednesses, they are  
 infirmities, and if not watcht against and  
 mourned over, will be charged on us as  
 Lies and Deceit.

In our ordinary social prayers, how hard  
 to



to keep our heart engaged in every  
 of Petition, Confession or Thank  
 uttered by him, that is our mouth  
 God's vagaries are a sort of  
 and wandering or diverting  
 ceiving.

In extraordinary Prayers on Fast  
 Humiliation Days there is a great  
 deceit used. Especially when men  
 strife and debate, Isa. 58. 4. ren  
 Garments but not their hearts, wat  
 their eyes, but do not afflict their  
 pen their mouths, but keep their  
 shut, their heads hang down for a  
 a Bulrush, ( though many arrive  
 that, and so their lying is the mo  
 and obvious, and their sin goes befo  
 unto Judgment.) But they have no  
 nce of a broken heart and contrite  
 to present the Lord withal. What  
 but dissembling and lying, while they  
 tend performance of the Duties of such a  
 Solemnity, and yet neglect the principal  
 thing required? If there be not (on such  
 days especially) in their Addresses to God,  
 hearty confessions of sin, deep Humiliation  
 under it, and Soul affliction for it, with  
 ferious resolution to turn from it; all that  
 is done without this, is nothing but lying  
 and deceiving, and the greater the expence  
 in the external part of the duty, the great  
 er the deceit if not rightly performed.

To instance in the several parts of pray-

1. There is Confession, and that either of Gods Glory, or our sin and vileness.

If we make Confession of Gods Glory and Majesty, and yet do not really and practically believe what we say; We call him Father, but do not honour him; Master, but do not fear him; Lord, but do not obey him; or Shepherd, but do not hear *his voice and follow him*; what do we less than mock and lye to him.

We confess his Omniscience, but carry toward him in our hearts, as if he were far out of our sight, that though he planted the ear, and formed the eye, could neither hear nor see, *but was like the deaf and blind Idol, Psal. 115.* come with our hands full of sin, as if we thought he could not discern whether we did lift up *holy hands* or no. 1 Tim. 2. 8.

We acknowledge his Powers in words, but doubt of his Ability to save us, and engage not our hearts to take bold of his Strength and be at peace with him.

We confess his Wisdom, and yet will instruct and limit the Holy One of Israel, and be our own carvers in point of the things we would have granted us.

We call him our Sovereign, but must have our own wills, and while we say, *Thy Will be done*, are very impatient if ours



be not complied with.

We verbally own his Goodness, but we lye in our hearts if we do not close with him as Goodness it self, and make him the object of our highest love accordingly.

We own his Mercy, but do not repose and hope in it: Confess him to be Just, and yet pass not the time of our sojourning before him in fear. We say it's a fearful thing to fall into his hands, and yet by such kind of trifling in his Worship do most directly deliver our selves up into the Hands of his Jealousie and Justice.

We profess our love to him, but while our heart is not with him, we mock him and lye to him, as the told Sampson, Judg. 16. 15.

Thus while we confess all Gods Glorious Attributes in prayer, but do not make him the object of our Faith, Love, Fear, Delight, &c. we do but lye to him.

Thus also in Confession of our own Sin and Vileness.

We often confess sin, but do not believe that we are such Sinners indeed as we say we are, nor are sensible what an evil and bitter thing sin is. We call our selves Sinners in the general, but when we come to particulars, are ready to extenuate and excuse if not to deny it.

Again, if we confess the sin that we have no mind to part with, and acknowledge



Judge those Iniquities that we keep in our bosoms, with complacence and delight, what is this but deceitful dealing with God? We seem very pathetically in words to confess our own wretchedness and unworthiness, but God and our own Consciences know that we do but lye unto him, while not humbled to this day, Jer. 44. 10. and are better opinionated of our selves than wee pretend to in our Confessions.

2. A second part of Prayer is Petition. And there is also a great deal of lying and deceit. As for Instance,

When we ask outward things to spend them upon our Lusts & not that we may sincerely use them for the Glory of God; this is asking amiss, Jam. 4. 3. This is deceitful Praying, to ask his mercies that we may fight against him with his own weapons; what is it but Couzenage and Deceit? So when we ask Gifts only to make a fine shew among men, and get a Reputation for Religion; which is finally to sacrifice Gods Gifts to our ambition and vain-glory.

Or when we ask spiritual Blessings which we are not really concerned to receive. Austin has such a passage in his Confessions, that he often asked that of God in Prayer, which he was in his heart afraid lest he should give. Many seem to beg hard for Grace, when God knows, they do not desire it; ask Knowledge, when they hate the light, and

and cannot endure to come to it; ask to have sin pardoned, when they cannot part with it, purged, while they hold fast their ~~desire~~ and refuse to let it go, this is downright *lying before God*, Jer. 8. 5. Thus we pray for the Sanctifying of his Name, Coming of his Kingdom, doing of his Will, but in heart we are for neither of them.

Of such kind of addressing God in a Time of Affliction, the Lord pronounces that it is but *flattering and lying*, and that because the *Heart is not right with God*, Psa. 78. 34--37.

And so of our Thanksgiving, which is also a part of Prayer, when we say in words, *Lord, we bless and praise thy Name*, but our hearts are not fixed to that work, nor do we take due care to order our whole Conversation so as may be most for his Service and Glory. Verbal praising of God, with practical dishonouring of him is plain *lying*.

So when we promise to him what we never intend to perform, at least never duly care to perform; they that make solemn vows in the days of their distress, but forget to pay them in the days of their enlargement, are but *liars and deceivers*.

2. Of the Lying and Deceit in Hearing the Word.

When men hear, but bare hearing is all they do. Hear with the ear, but never set the



the heart to all those things that are testified, which *Moses* advises them unto *Deut.* 32. 46.

*Hear*, but not as the *Word* of *God*; *Acts* 10. 33. *Hear*, but do not take care, and heed how they hear; *Hear*, but the heart goes after their *Covetousness*, *Ezek.* 33. 31. *Hear*, but gaze and wander the while, and it may be fall fast asleep too. (And by the way, sleeping at Meeting is visible and palpable *lying*, especially if allowed, and not to the utmost resisted and striven against: *Eutychus* was taken in the manner, *Acts* 20. 9. and made a solemn Monitor to waken all Sleepers.)

*Hear*, but come with an idol in their heart, hear and go forth immediately, and all they hear is lost, the *Word* choakt, and so their labour proves in vain.

To hear without an unfeigned Resolution to no as well as hear, together with a sincere endeavour to perform what they resolve, is *lying* and *deceitful* Hearing.

3. *At a Sacrament men lye to God.*

When they do not discern the *Lords* Body, do not make it their business to see and converse with a *Crucified Christ* that is there held forth.

When they come to a *Feast*, but come not with an appetite, to a *Wedding Feast*, but not with a *Wedding Garment*; come to receive a *Gift*, but either bring or



put forth no hand of Faith to take it.

When at the beholding of a Crucified Christ, there is no mourning over him, nor for their sins that Crucified him, no activity of Faith, though the Lord Jesus be evidently set forth as Crucified, for the drawing forth of their Faith on him; no inflaming of their Love, by the dying Love of a dear Saviour, which they are then called to a fixed meditation on; the failure here speaks the neglect of what is the principal end of a Sacrament, and therefore is no less than *lying and deceit* in Gods account. However the external Deportment may appear fair and commendable before men, that can only judge by the seeing of the eye, and hearing of the ear.

4. So we may say of the Sabbath.

Which is a special season for the attending on instituted Worship. If it be not kept according to the Law of the Sabbath, if we do not Sanctifie the Sabbath, that God may Sanctifie us on and by the Sabbath, Ezek. 20. 12. If the Sabbath be not remembered and prepared for, and sanctified as an Holy Rest *unto* and *unto* God, we do but mock God, and deceive our selves. If our Sabbath-keeping be not a *Delight*, it is a cheat; if we only cease from servile labour, but not from speaking our own words, and following our carnal and sinful pleasures, or if we account only that part of the day.

To be Sabbath which we spend in the Public Worship, and the residue of the time, both before, after, and in the intervals of Worship, be spent as common time; the whole of our Sabbath-keeping is Sabbath-breaking, and our pretences fallacious and deceitful.

These are some hints which the serious Hearer may easily enlarge in his Meditations.

I should have added here something,

1. Of the greatness of this sin.
2. Of the loathsomeness of its punishment.

But that I chuse to bring them in either as Motives to incline us to a true and right performance of the Duties of Worship, Or as Dissuasives from this sin of Lying therein.

### *By way of Application.*

First, I shall draw some Inferences from the Doctrine.

1. If there be such a thing as Lying and Deceitful Dealing in Gods Worship. — Then we have the less cause to wonder that there is so much Lying and Deceit among men in their converse with each other. It's a very lying Age that we live in. Men lye one to another, in falsifying their words, breaking their promises, yea, and more



more solemn Obligations. Men lye one of another by scandalous Reports which they raise and broach, very much to the detriment of their Neighbours, and reproach of Religion. Yea, there are that make it no small part of their business to invent & frame Lies, and scatter them abroad, to amuse the World withal, and to draw forth mens sentiments, on which they make their Remarks, and of which they make matter of Accusation. There is also much Deceiving and Over-reaching one another in Dealing, the weakest (though the honestest) goes to the wall; I say there is much of this among men. Think it not strange, while there is so much dissembling with God himself, you may look to meet with the like among men. And it arises from the same principle, the *Atheism* that is in all Mankind, that which makes them dare to lie to God, will not let them stick at lying to men. Look for nothing but falsehood and mischief from him that makes no Conscience of essaying to put his cheats upon the Great God. He that will adventure to lye to God directly, will not stick more remotely to lye to him, as all lying to men is, all sin being finally against God.

2. See what little cause we have to boast of any merit in any of our Services; where there is so much deceit, there can be no Merit.

Out-



**Outward Performances** if they be only *such*, are meer *lies*, and therefore rather provocations unto God, than obligations upon him. Hence when they trusted to the Temple of the Lord, and to their Services and Sacrifices there, the Lord tells them *they trusted in lying words*, Jer. 7. 4. 8.

But suppose they be sincere performances, worship done in spirit and truth, there will be no room for trusting in or boasting of them; for the sincerity of the heart is Grace, & that Grace tho inherent, yet is infused Grace, & the exercise of that sincerity in Worship is exciting Grace, & *all Grace* takes away all occasion of boasting.

There are some actings of pride in the best, to their shame and confusion of face, when they reflect thereupon: but usually, or mostly they are false in their Worship that trust to it, and of them it may be said, *they trust to a Refuge of Lies, and under falshood do they hide themselves*, Isa. 28. 15. Because all their Worship is so. Were our Services never so good, yet if trusted in when we have done them, we make a *lye*, an Idol of them, and shall find them to be a *lye* to us; much more when there is so much *deceit* attending the best of our doings, and so much lameness, leanness, and deformity in the chiefest of our Sacrifices.

3. Hence see also the reason why God

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is angry oft times at the Prayers of his People, viz. because he hates lying, of which he finds so much in them: *Psal. 80. 4.* And hence there is so little success in praying, so few Answers of their Prayers. Those that are lying Services to God, will be lying Services to us also, nothing will come of them but Provocation and Punishment.

We know that God *heareth not Sinners*, *Joh. 9. 31.* Lyars and Deceiters as they *shall not dwell with him*, *Psal. 101. 7.* so neither shall their Services come before him with Acceptance.

Let none of us that are conscious to ourselves of a great deal of that Guilt in our Services, quarrel with God, and say, *Wherefore have we fasted and thou seest not?* *Isa. 58. 3.* That Context will answer them and us, and this Text will stop our mouths. It is said, *Hab. 3. 7.* *The labour of the Olive fails*, it is in the Hebrew *Lies*, i. e. their labour about the Olive in planting, pruning, dressing, from which they expect some fruit, produces nothing, nothing comes of it; so will the labour of such a Worshipper prove, his Prayer was a Lie to God, and it is very just it should be found a Lie to him.

#### USE II. Of Conviction.

Let this Doctrine also be improved unto  
E Conviction.



Conviction, and upon due, serious and strict Examination, Conviction will follow. Is there not too too much of this *lying Worship* to be found among us?

Here is a great deal of worship, and many Worshippers. And those Worshippers that seek God daily, and approach into his presence frequently, are either Regenerate or Unregenerate, (for we may not believe, that all outward Worshippers are inwardly sincere) Now as to the *Unregenerate*, especially if they are so knowingly, and continue so contentedly, all their worship is a meer lye, all their devotion is a meer cheat, and so an abomination unto God; they do nothing else but beleagure and beset him with lies, are always fighting God with their lies, and many, perhaps the Body of *Israel* whom the Lord thus treats in the Text, were such.

As to the *Regenerate*, they are not wholly freed from this way of lying, there are some Remains of Guile and Hypocrisie, which like dead flies are dropping into, and corrupting the Oyntment, or Incense of their best Performances.

And for our Conviction, let us look back on the particular Instances given in the several parts of Worship; besides, what further Reflections every diligent, curious self-examiner may make upon himself. Think with our selves what a Trade of

lying we have driven with God, how many of those Abominations we have wrought in his sight, how many plain lyes we have told him to his face; and let us be vile in our own eyes, in that we have so often done that which is so vile in his. The Lord expects very deep Humiliation for our so great and frequent Dissimulation in his Worship; whatever Infirmities God may bear withal in his Children, he will not tolerate lying in them; dealing falsely in his Worship we must very particularly repent of, and reform.

### USE III.

Let this serve for a word of solemn Denunciation from this great and frequent sin, that is so commonly found in the midst of us. Oh all ye VVorshippers of God be perswaded to put away your lying, and let your deceit no longer lodg with you. Do not come to the House of God to tell him a pack of lies from day to day, Trouble him with no more deceitful and vain oblations, for shame leave off lying.

Paul charges them, Eph 4.25. with Col. 3.9. to put away lying one to another. But this Doctrine presents us with a more solemn and necessary charge, (and that which if taken notice of, and complied with, would cure the other.) *Lye not to the God of Truth.*



*Eli* was mistaken when he said to *Hanna*,  
*Sam. i. 14. How long wilt thou be drunk?*  
*put away thy Wine.* But alas, that there  
 should be such just cause to say to many  
 Worshippers in the House of God, *How*  
*long will you tell us in Gods Worship,*  
*put away your deceit from you.*

So inforce this Dissuasive,

Let us consider,

1. The Greatness of the sin.
2. The soreness of the punishment.
3. The good of performing true Worship in  
 a right and sincere manner.

1. The greatness of the sin.

1. It is *Lying*. And I need say no more.  
 It's a sin though so generally practised, yet  
 every where spoken against. It is a sin  
 which mans corrupt nature is dreadfully  
 addicted to; they go astray from the Womb,  
 speaking lies, *Psal. 58. 3.* And yet it is a  
 sin condemned by the light of nature, con-  
 demned by the verdict of every mans Con-  
 science that is not blinded or bribed, asleep  
 or seared. Men hate to be imposed upon  
 with lies, and will be more ready to for-  
 give a very great fault than a little one,  
 when aggravated with *Lying*. It's reckon-  
 ed among the seven Abominations that the  
 Lord hates, *Prov. 6. 16.*---19. yea and ac-  
 counted big enough to make two of the  
 seven (if not three of them) though in  
 a different sense.

2. But

2. But more than so, it's *lying to God*, and that sin cost *Ananias* and *Sapphira* their lives, *Act. 5: 4, &c.* And it's no small wonder of Patience and Long-suffering that the Lord makes no more such Examples among the great Troops of *lying Worshippers* that compass him every day, especially considering what a jealous God he is in point of Worship. To have a Company of Hypocrites come before God from time to time, only to fill his ears with *lies*, must needs be highly provoking, and it is very strange that the Angel of the Lord is not sent forth to make them all dead Corpses; Spiritual Judgments are doubtless secretly inflicted upon them; which are the more dreadful because the less observable.

3. It's rank *Atheism*, nor could men persist in such a course if they did realize the Being of God, or had not in their own imaginations framed to themselves a God like themselves. According to our sentiments of God in our Hearts, so are our Carriages toward him in his Worship. *Deceitful Worshipping* of him speaks us very much deceived in our Conceptions about him.

4. It is extream Insolence, daring boldness and presumption thus to impose upon God, to fight against him with our *Lies*, to cover his Face and ask who smote him.



5. It is folly in the very Exaltation of it, such formal Services are Fools-services. Solomon calls rash, sudden, hasty, unprepared Sacrifices, the *Sacrifices of Fools*, Eccl. 5. 1. I am sure, *lying* ones are such. It's folly for any thus to go about to impose on the Omniscient God, the height of folly once to dream of *deceiving* him, and worse than madness it self to do so by him, if they did not think they could deceive him.

6. It disposes to a vain, unprofitable, Atheistical Conversation in our whole Deportment. As we are in our Worship, so we are in all our Walk. He that is Formal and Atheistical there, will be so elsewhere.

### 2. *The foreness of the punishment.*

And you may well imagine that God will in Justice provide a strange punishment for such workers of Iniquity; were it only that one Text, it were very dreadful Mala. 1. 14. *Cursed be the Deceiver*. If doing the work of the Lord deceitfully does, then much more the doing of the worship of the Lord deceitfully will bring a Curse Jer. 48. 10.

#### Particulars,

1. All such *lying* worshippers will lose all that they have wrought 2. Joh. 8. all our *deceitful Hearing, Praying, Sabbath-keeping, &c.* will be utterly lost, as to any real profit that shall ever come to us by them.

them. Oh the many costly laborious services that many Ignorant zealots have lost ! the painful performances of the Papists that are *Lies* are all lost, the fair out-side shews of the Hypocrite are all lost. Those that are least, or nothing in the Inside are most in the out-side, and they all whose *Services* are a *lye* ( not having the Heart in them ) use to *lye* most splendidly of any ; but they shall get nothing by their *lying*, nothing from God, nothing of his Company or Blessing : a little Reputation from men they may get, but what does that signify ? They do but worship him in vain, *Mat. 23. 9.* and therefore God bids such deceitful Offerers to bring no more such vain oblations, *Isa. 1. 13.* They were utterly in vain as to the great end of them, Communion with God by them. There were a company of Professing Believers, *Joh. 2. 23, 25* unto whom Christ could not commit himself, they seemed to trust him, but he would not be trust himself with them, because he knew their hearts, he knew they were *Lyars* and *Deceivers* in their hearts, and their outward profession without inward sincerity, could obtain nothing with Christ. *Lying* spoils all conversation among men, and hinders converse with Christ, *Pro. 19. 22.* The poor man is better than the lyar. He that serves God with his Heart, though his poverty allows him to offer no more than



than two mites, shall be accepted of God, while the more liberal Contributions of *heartless* and therefore *deceitful* men shall be rejected. The want of the Heart makes it a *lye*, and every *lye* is *lost* to the *Maker*.

2. Nay more than so, such worship is not only lost to them, but very provoking to God; they cannot anger a jealous God more than by such *Deceitful Services*, his Anger smokes against *lying Prayers*, and the more of *such* prayers, the more Anger.

Hence in the first Chapter following on the Text it's said, *They increased Lies and Desolation*; what *Lies* did they increase? Sure those *lies* in worship, for which they were blamed in my Text; they continued in their formal worship, multiplied their Sacrifices, and did the while but multiply *lies*; their new Sacrifices were but *Compassing God about with new Lies*; and what did they further increase thereby? why, they increased *Desolation*. Increase of such *Services*, was increase of *Lies*, increase of *Lies* was increase of *Provocation* unto God, and consequently of *Desolation* unto them. It's hard to say, whether people do more provoke God by their sins, or by their *Prayers* and *Confessions*, performed with so much *Guile* and *Hypocrisie*, especially when by those Duties they think to expiate their sins. While they are *compassing God about with Lies*, he is *compassing them about with threatenings*.

Threatnings, which like a storm of Hail shall sweep away their *Refuge of Lies*.

*Outward Judgments* are often sent by God upon a Professing People, as a Testimony from Heaven against such *Falshood* and *Disimulation*. Is not this one main cause of Gods Severity towards us at this day, viz. our prevaricating with him in his Worship? either the total neglect of it in many, the deceitful performances in some, or the unanswerable walking in all, has had a deep share in procuring these Calamities under which we are now labouring. Does not the Lord render his Rebukes in flames of Fire, for our coldness, or false Fire in his Worship? The sudden stroke on Nadab and Abihu was for their offering up of strange Fire, and Lies is strange Fire. The Arrow shot out of such a deceitful Bow flies back to the damage of him that shoots it, Hose 7. 16. Thus Paul tells us, that for the abusing of that Ordinance sickness and death were sent among them, 1 Cor. 11. 30. And no way is an Ordinance more abused than by this way of lying.

*Spiritual Judgments*, though more secret, and not so much taken notice of, are yet more dreadful, and no less certain. As evil men and seducers in point of Doctrine, so evil men and deceivers in point of Worship, *was worse and worse*, 2 Tim 3. 13. *deceiving and being deceived*, they deal



( 32 )  
Deceitfully with God, do deceive others;  
( as has been already noted ) and do most  
lamentably deceive themselves into a false  
peace, till at length they find themselves  
irrecoverably lost. Their worshipping im-  
boldens them to sinning. They sin, and  
then bring their Peace-offering, and so pay  
the old score, and then begin upon a new.  
Prov. 7. 14. As if by their Duties they  
had made amends for their past sins, and  
obtained a Dispensation for the commit-  
ting of more. Thus the Prophet brings  
them in Jer. 7. 9, 10. As Stealing, and com-  
mitting Adultery, &c. and then by Stand-  
ing, i. e. Worshipping or Sacrificing ) in  
Gods House, think themselves delivered to  
do all those Abominations, i. e. delivered  
from the wickedness already done, and li-  
censed to hold on the same Trade still.  
Thus as some turn the Grace of God into  
Lasciviousness, Jude 4. so these turn the  
Worship of God into Lasciviousness, and  
what greater Spiritual Judgment than to be  
given up of God to this? It is rendered  
there as a mark of men of old ordained  
unto Condemnation. Nothing more fatal,  
than by vain Services, to be left to vain  
Confidences, till unexpected Ruine at last  
overtake them. And that is the last thing  
here to be considered; viz.

3. The final destruction of such Deceit-  
ful Worshippers whose Plagues will be most

wonderful. *Hypocrites* have the forest punishment allotted them. Every piece of *Deceitful Worship* will be an Article in the Indictment. They make themselves Two-fold more the Children of Damnation than the poor Heathen that never performed any duty of Worship to God in their lives. While some *Drink and Swear and Curse and Damn* themselves to Hell, others *pray and bear* themselves thither, and into a deeper and hotter Hell too than others arrive at. For men to destroy themselves with a great deal of pains, labour, cost, splendor and grandeur is the worst kind of Destruction.

Your *Lying, Deceitful Services* and Performances are both the pretences that you Compass God with, and the sparks that you Compass and comfort your selves with, but the Reward you will receive at the hands of God will be to *lye down in sorrow*, *Isa 50. ult.* Such Worshippers of God are nevertheless counted forgetters of God, and their Doom is, *To be Torn in Pieces without any to deliver them. Psal. 50, 22.*

*The Benefit of True and Sincere Worshipping of God.*

This is a large Theam, I shall but glance at a few hints. What is said of keeping Gods Commandments in General. *Great is the Reward Psal. 9. 11.* is eminently true of the second Commandment, which gives



direction about *Instituted Worship*, see *Exod.* 20. 6. And if you referr it to the Third Commandment, where the Lord threatens the Breaker of it, *Not to hold him guiltless*, it is a *Meiosis*, and forest wrath is intended therein, and on the other-hand all manner of blessings are designed for the keeper of that Command. If the *Deceiver* in Worship be Cursed *Mala.* 1, 11. Then the sincere Worshiper is blessed. Blessed with all spiritual blessings, God accepts his Services, remembers his Offerings, will give him pardon, peace, joy, the strength of his Right Hand &c. see *Psal.* 20. 1--6. *He shall see the Lords goings in his Sanctuary.* And shall be able to attelt to *Dauids* Experience, (*Psal.* 84. 10.) *One day in Gods House is worth a Thousand.*

Blessed with all outward blessings also. Seeking the *Kingdom of God first*, (of which no small part lies in a right performing the worship of the Kingdom) has a promise of the Addition of *all other things*, *Mat.* 6. 33. God deals with a professing people as they deal with him in his Worship. If we Compass him with hearty sincere service, he will Compass us with favour as with a *Shield*. *Psal.* 12, *Mercy shall Compass us, no good thing shall be wanting to us.* While such kind of formal worshippers of whom we have been speaking, say as they feel, that it is in vain to serve God, we shall

Speak as we find, *That it is good for us to draw near unto God*, Psal. 23. 28.

*Directions for the Cure of this Malady.*

1. Be sure we fix upon the right ( and there is but one right ) Object of Worship. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, Mat. 4. 10. The great God is the sole Object of Worship. Let us not make our Bellies our God, Gold our Hope; the World our portion; nor our own Righteousness, Wisdom, or Strength our Idols; nor our selves our Saviours; Sacrifice not to our own Net; nor burn Incense to our own Drag. Hab. 1. 16.

2. Be well acquainted with the Person whom we Worship, and that will oblige us what we may to study a proportion between our Worship, and the Object of our Worship.

The Knowledge of God will teach us that he is to be Worshipped, and also how he is to be Worshipped, will make us fear to neglect it, and assist us in the due performance of it.

To cure the Deceiver that had a Male in his flock, but offered a corrupt thing, the Lord gives him to understand, and wills him to consider that he was a Great King, and had a Dreadful Name, even the Lord of Hosts, Mal. 1. 14.



His being a *Spirit* will tell us that he is to be *Worshipped in Spirit and Truth*, not after a *carnal* and *lying* manner.

Consider him as the first Being, & chiefest Good, & thence learn, that the first & best of our *Hearts, Abilities, Time, Spirits, Souls*, are his due, and that *lame, blind, heartless, lifeless Services* are very much unbecoming him.

His *Sovereignty* as it commands *Devotion*, so it will guard us from snuffing at his *Service*, or flubbering over his *Worship*.

His *Omnipresence* will beget *Reverence*, and promote *Sincerity*. It's no great matter how men carry it before an *Idol* that has no eyes, but *Reason*, much more *Religion* will direct us to look to our selves, when we have such an eye upon us, and will be useful to prevent that commonness of *Heart and Carriage* so unsuitable for his *Presence*.

His *Omniscience* will assure us that he will not be *sham'd* nor imposed upon, there's no *mocking* him with shadows or pretences; he is not to be treated after that manner. He will say to every *Hypocrite*, tho' under the greatest disguise, why feignest thou thy self to be another person, I have heavy Tidings for thee; and a *Curse* upon the *Deceiver* is heavy Tidings.

His *Omnipotence* will represent him as a person that has in a readiness wherewith

to avenge all Affronts, and to assist all the Humble Souls that desire to serve him better.

His *Holiness* tells us that we must lift up *holy hands and hearts* before him, and purge our selves in order to our being *Vessels fitted for our Masters use*.

His *Justice* will caution us from taking his *Name in vain*, because he will not hold us *Guileless*; and when we take up his Worship without spirit, heart, life, care, labour, seriousness, we take his *Name in vain*.

His *Bounty and Goodness* will quicken us to serve him with *Enlargedness* of Heart, who hath such a *liberal* hand to reward all his Servants.

His *Truth and Faithfulness* as they will put us beyond dispute about the certainty of the *Reward*, if we serve him well, so of the *Punishment*, if trifling and slightly therein.

Thus right Conceptions of God will notably influence you into right Worship, & a due performance of it.

3. Study well the *right* way in which God will be Worshipped, and his *own* way is the only *right* way. He hath plainly told us in his Word, *how* he will be Worshipped; if we bring him any other Worship than that of his own prescribing, he will call it *lying and deceit*. Beware therefore



that none spoil you through vain deceit after the *Traditions of men*, Col. 2. 8. A very good caution, for *Traditions of men* in the Worship of God, will spoil our Worship, and spoil us also, and are rightly called *deceitful and vain*, because they take us off from the only true, acceptable and profitable Service of God. Resolve upon it, either Bible-Worship or none at all, all other being as, yea worse than none. It's lying worship if not warranted by God's Word, whatever pretences it may make to Decency in it self, or Authority from men, Traditions from our Fore-fathers, or the Commands of the Church, God will say of it, *Bring no more vain oblations, & who has required these things at your hands?* Nor will God take it as an answer if we say that *Ecclesiastical Authority* enjoined it, unless it agree with the *Pattern in the Mount*, and be prescribed by the *Lord of the House*.

4. Let us offer up all our worship by Christ, God in Christ is the object of Divine Worship. To goe to God in our Prayers or other Services, immediately, to God out of or without Christ is to lye in our services. That General Rule of *Doing all in the Name of the Lord Jesus* Col. 2. 17. holds most strictly in point of worship. All our prayers are to be made in his Name, Job. 14. 41. And all our praises are to be Offered up by him, Heb. 13. 15.

Other

Otherwise what-ever of Labour, Care, Zeal, Cost, may be put into our Oblations, if there be nothing of Christ in them they signify nothing at all with God ; they are Lame, Blind, Lean and Dead Sacrifices, and will be most displeasing in Gods most Pure Eies, and the savour of them very offensive to his Nostrils if not perfumed with the Incense of his Merits which he is Offering up with the prayers of the Saints,

5. See that our Hearts be in the worship, fervently and frequently make that necessary Prayer, Ps. 119. 80. *Let my Heart be found in thy Statutes*, especially found in thy Statutes and my performances about Worship, because God is eminently Jealous there. Daily make Davids prayer, *That God will remove from us the way of lying*, Psal. 119. 29. And that particularly when we draw near unto God in worship, that we may do it with a true Heart, Heb. 10. 22. Engage the Heart to go along with our Bodies and Tongues, when addressing the Heart-searching God, yea & do not only carry our Hearts thither, but by an extraordinary care and watchfulness keep them there, that they may not give you the slip, and so render all your worship *successless*, because *heartless*. Then only do you worship God in Spirit and Truth when your Hearts are sincerely active in what you



do. Dare not offer unto God that which cost you nothing but a little Breath and Lip-labour, remember that your Heart gives value to your two Mites, the least piece of Hearty Service is in high esteem with God.

6. Finally let our constant Walk be always consonant to our Worship, our Deportment agreeable to our Devotions, our whole Conversations such as become such Worshippers. A loose Conversation gives the lye to a specious profession. If what be said in words is contradicted in works, God will call it *lying and deceit*, Tit. 1. 16. To be zealous and warm in our *Worship* but luke warm and carnal in our *Walk* is most absurd and Contradictory. Let us *Live* our *Hearing, Praying, Sabbaths, Sacraments, &c.* and then we worship well, And if we do indeed worship well, our *worship* to God will observably Influence, all our *converse* with men. And Oh how amiable and pleasant is an Harmonious Agreement there! And how unseemly the contrary! That men walk no better before and after worship, is an ill sign of their being *insincere and false and deceitful in it.*

To Conclude,

Thus you have heard one more very common and provoking sin declaimed against. And note that when the Lord gave the Prophet Isa. 58. 1. &c. his Com-

mission To shew unto his people their Trans-  
 gressions, And to the house of Jacob their sins,  
 this was the first sin that he directed him to  
 lift up his voice and sound his Trumpet  
 against. There was much Worship, but  
 little Holiness, many Sacrifices but no Righ-  
 teousness, frequent Approaches to God,  
 but little Walking with him. And it's e-  
 vident that their design in these external  
 performances was to conceal or get allow-  
 ance for their wickedness, as appears by  
 quarrelling God that he took no more no-  
 tice of their *Fastings*, nor gave them expect-  
 ed Answers to their *Prayers*, though the  
 Lord sufficiently stopt their mouth, by let-  
 ting them know, that while they lived in  
 such palpable neglect of the *Second-Table-*  
*Duties*, their pretended compliance with  
 the *First*, could very little avail them. Of  
 the like import is *Psal.* 50. and *Isa.* 1. in  
 the latter of which he plainly tells them,  
*That the multitude of their Sacrifices was to*  
*no purpose, they did but trouble him, and*  
*not profit themselves: & God bids them give*  
*over, verse 13.* Not that he did abate them  
 these *Sacrifices*, or will abate us our *Devo-*  
*tion*; no, but bring no more vain *Oblations*;  
 so does God say to us, bring no more lying  
*Services*, make no more deceitful *Prayers*;  
 let me have no more of these *formal, Hypo-*  
*critical Assemblings*. Upon the penalty of lo-  
 sing all our *Prayers*, ( & we had better lose



all the Comforts we have in the World, than lose our Prayers) Upon the penalty of having them turned into sin, ( a dreadful increase upon Judas that monstrous Hypocrite, as appears by comparing Psal 109. 7. with Mat. 1. 20. and that which every such dissembling Worshipper may be afraid of. ) Upon the penalty of losing all gracious converse with God, of blocking up the way to prevent any good coming at thee for ever, of having the Lord to kindle a fire in his Jealousie that shall burn to the lowest Hell, of his rending thee in pieces, & there be none to deliver thee, I say upon all these penalties, ( and they are terrible ones ) leave off, presently and utterly leave off All lying & dissembling with God in his Worship.

Do not cast off worship because it is so dangerous to intermeddle with, but engage in it sincerely; heartily, with Reverence & godly fear; shun the lying & deceit that too often does attend it, comply with the sincerity & painfulness, care & conscience that always should attend it. Sincerity will God approve of and countenance; Infirmary, especially when beset & resisted, he will forgive & overlook, & all the expence we are at in Worshipping God in spirit & truth, will be plentifully compensated by fulfilling that promise, Exo. 20. 23. In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will Bless thee.

